

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Public Hearing – April 12, 2022

Raised Bill 491 AAC The Conveyance of a Parcel of State Property to the Town of Sharon

POSITION: Table pending more information.

Dear Sen. Flexer, Rep Fox, and members of the GAE Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill. We work together on lands issues at the State Water Planning Council Advisory Group, but we write here as individuals, not representing any group.

As you may know, we have been in contact with the Committee concerning the need for more information regarding conveyances that may involve natural resources such as water and tree stands. We appreciate that the Committee has responded by incorporating appropriate questions on such information in their conveyance request form.

Unfortunately, Bill 491 lacks basic information including information normally given in more conveyance bills and important environmental information.

We ask the Committee to defer action on this Bill until the following information is available for public comment:

- The proposed use.

- Actions on the property, such as construction, required to implement the use.

- A reverter clause.

- Characteristics of the tract to be conveyed; for example, presence of trees, a vernal pool, a protection area for source water, etc.

- Any change in related access.

We are aware that this is a small conveyance, only a fraction of an acre. We have learned over the years, however, that even tiny parcels can be significant in opening valuable access to larger areas or changing property rights, for example, by increasing frontage.

In the present case, the conveyance is from state conservation land, the Housatonic Meadows State Park. As has been much publicized, the trees in this park are prized by the public. Information on the presence of one or more trees is relevant.

In summary, we hope you will understand our attention to the conveyance. We urge you to postpone a decision until you and the public have had a chance to review a more complete proposal.

Thank you.

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